

Congressional Fact Sheet Hiring Mental Health Professionals

Over the last several years, VA has continuously improved its integrated mental health delivery system. By increasing access across VA's continuum of care, these ongoing efforts have helped Veterans better transition from Active status into becoming a Veteran while improving the care they have earned through their service. Although significant work remains, Veterans and their families can always trust that VA will provide high quality, evidence-based treatments for both the Veteran and their families.

In an effort to allow greater access to Mental Health care for Veterans, VA is quickly hiring and deploying more mental health professionals. On April 19, VA announced that we would add approximately 1,900 mental health professionals, to include 1,600 mental health clinicians (psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health nurses, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and licensed professional mental health counselors) and 300 support staff to our existing workforce of 20,590 mental health clinical staff.

At VA, we have the opportunity, and responsibility, to anticipate the needs of returning Veterans. As they reintegrate into their communities, we must ensure all Veterans have access to quality mental health care when needed.

As part of our ongoing comprehensive review of mental health operations, VA considered a number of factors to determine additional staffing levels distributed across the system, including:

- Veteran population in the service area;
- The mental health needs of Veterans in that population;
- Range and complexity of mental health services provided in the service area.

VA regional networks will continue to use the same criteria to determine optimal staffing levels at facilities.

- Since there are no industry standards defining accurate mental health staffing ratios, VA is setting the standard as we have for other dimensions of mental health care.
- VHA has developed a prototype staffing model for mental health and will assess the effectiveness of mental health staffing levels against this model. VHA will build upon the successes of the primary care staffing model and apply these principles to mental health practices.
- Once the staffing model has been piloted and any necessary adjustments have been made, VA will share the model publicly and with the private sector providers. This guidance can be used to create similar staffing capacity in non-VA sites where Veterans choose to receive care, so they can better support the VA and military effort, and increase their own effectiveness in treating both Veterans and the civilian sector.

Within VISN 22 VA will be hiring an additional 112 mental health professionals. The facility breakdown of the positions can be found below:

VISN	Facility Name	Clinical	Clerical	Total
22	VA Southern Nevada HCS (Las Vegas)	22	4	26
	Long Beach	12	3	15
	Loma Linda VAMC	28	6	34
	San Diego HCS	32	5	37
	Total	94	18	112